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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, December 20, 1932

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "An Inexpensive Christmas Dinner." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--oooOooo--

A Christmas dinner that suits a slim pocketbook and a large family--that's the problem many of us homemakers have to solve this year. A Christmas dinner that is low in cost and high in good cheer and satisfaction. Let's sit down first thing this morning and talk over menu possibilities. I know this is only Tuesday and Christmas doesn't come until Sunday. But haven't you noticed what a relief it is to have the food plans all made well in advance of Christmas, the menu planned and the market order made out? That leaves the rest of the week for other important matters, such as helping the children set up and decorate the tree, trim the house, wrap packages, make candy or last-minute gifts or any of those other delightful jobs that make Christmas the best holiday of the year.

So much has been said and sung about the old-time, traditional Christmas feast with its huge roast goose and plum pudding and a table laden with rich hearty food that planning a low-cost Christmas dinner may look difficult. As a matter of fact, it's quite a simple matter, especially since we believe in being kind to our digestions in these modern times. Feasts have gone out of fashion. Our motto is: "Enough is better than a feast." And that applies to Christmas dinner as well as to every other meal. The dinner that will really make the family happy is one that is so perfectly cooked that every dish goes right to the spot, the simple dinner that satisfies but isn't too hearty. Table decorations of greens or red candles or any other holiday trimming will add a great deal to the festive atmosphere. So will a green and red color scheme in the meal itself. As for the items on the menu: A handsome roast of cured pork with its reddish color makes a delicious main dish and is very inexpensive. For example, you might have a roast cured shoulder of pork stuffed with raisin stuffing. You can buy a four or five pound picnic shoulder for a small family or a nine to ten pound long-cut shoulder to serve more people. Parsley to garnish the roast and buttered green beans to go with it help carry out the Christmas color scheme. Next item: Baked potatoes on the half shell. Paprika on the potatoes will give a dash of red. For salad, crisp slices of head lettuce with French dressing garnished with chopped sweet red and green peppers. Dessert? Jellied fruit. You can use either fresh or canned fruits molded in gelatin for this dessert, but for this special meal white fruits like canned pear or pineapple and red fruits like cherry will carry out the color scheme. Or, you can make a so-called jellied plum pudding by molding dried fruits like prunes, raisins, and dates in a tart gelatin mixture. You can serve these jellied fruit desserts either with or without cream. Top the meal off with coffee and homemade mints or other Christmas candies.



Now let's take a quick review of our menu. Roast stuffed cured shoulder with raisin stuffing and parsley garnish; Green beans; Baked potatoes on the half shell; Lettuce with French dressing garnished with chopped sweet red and green peppers; Jellied fruits; Coffee; Homemade mints or other candy.

There's the low-cost Christmas dinner menu.

Now let's discuss this roast cured pork shoulder, a roast that tastes and looks like ham but costs less. Ask your butcher to skin and bone a cured pork shoulder. When you get the shoulder home, wash and soak it overnight in enough cold water to cover it. When you remove the piece from the water, wipe it dry. Now lay the shoulder fat side down and pile in some of the hot stuffing. Begin to sew the edges of the shoulder together to form a pocket and gradually work in the rest of the stuffing. Now lay the stuffed shoulder, fat side up, on a rack in an open roasting pan. Use no water. Roast the meat at very moderate heat (325 degrees F.) until it is tender when you pierce it with a skewer or fork. The small picnic shoulder, weighing four or five pounds, will require about three and a half hours to cook at this oven temperature. A nine to ten pound long-cut shoulder will need from four and a half to five hours.

So much for the job of roasting. Now the recipe for the raisin stuffing. This recipe makes the right quantity for the smaller shoulder. If you're having a large roast- a long-cut shoulder, you'll need to double these quantities. Eight ingredients:

2 tablespoons of butter or other fat  
1 tablespoon of chopped onion  
1 cup of finely cut celery and tops  
2 tablespoons of chopped parsley  
2 and 1/2 cups of fine dry bread crumbs  
1/2 pound of seeded chopped raisins  
Grated rind of one-half lemon, and  
1/2 teaspoon of salt

I'll repeat that list. (Repeat).

Cook the onion, celery and parsley in the fat for a few minutes. Mix the raisins thoroughly with the bread crumbs, stir in the cooked vegetables, and add the lemon rind and salt. There's your stuffing all made.

Tomorrow: "Christmas Greens."

Thursday, another special Christmas Menu with two new Recipes.

